

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3661

To help ensure general aviation aircraft access to Federal land and to the
airspace over that land.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 15, 2000

Mr. HANSEN (for himself, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. HAYES, Mr. HEFLEY, Mrs. CUBIN, Mr. MCINNIS, Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE, Mr. JENKINS, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. GIBBONS, Mr. RADANOVICH, and Mr. CANNON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To help ensure general aviation aircraft access to Federal
land and to the airspace over that land.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “General Aviation Ac-
5 cess Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress finds as follows:

3 (1) The Secretary of the Interior and the Sec-
4 retary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Ad-
5 ministrator of the Federal Aviation Administration,
6 should adopt a nationwide policy for governing gen-
7 eral aviation issues related to the management of
8 Federal land under the jurisdiction of those Secre-
9 taries and should require regional managers to ad-
10 here to that policy.

11 (2) Backcountry aircraft landing strips serve an
12 essential safety role as emergency landing areas.

13 (3) General aviation provides access to people
14 who would otherwise be physically unable to enjoy
15 national parks, national forests, and other Federal
16 lands and serves an essential purpose in search and
17 rescue, firefighting, forest, and ecological manage-
18 ment, research, and aerial mapping.

19 **SEC. 3. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERATION OF ACTIONS AF-**
20 **FFECTING AIRCRAFT LANDING STRIPS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Neither the Secretary of the Inte-
22 rior nor the Secretary of Agriculture shall take any action
23 or inaction, including neglect, which would permanently
24 close or render or declare as unserviceable any aircraft
25 landing strip unless—

1 (1) the Administrator of the Federal Aviation
2 Administration and the head of the aviation depart-
3 ment of each State in which the aircraft landing
4 strip is located have approved the action;

5 (2) notice of the proposed action and the fact
6 that the action would permanently close or render or
7 declare as unserviceable the aircraft landing strip
8 has been published in the Federal Register, with a
9 cross reference under the Federal Aviation Adminis-
10 tration heading;

11 (3) a 90-day public comment period on the ac-
12 tion has been provided after the publication under
13 paragraph (2); and

14 (4) any comments received during the comment
15 period provided under paragraph (3) have been
16 taken into consideration by the Secretary of the In-
17 terior or the Secretary of Agriculture, as the case
18 may be, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation
19 Administration, and the head of the aviation depart-
20 ment of each State in which the affected aircraft
21 landing strip is located.

22 (b) NATIONAL POLICY.—Not later than 2 years after
23 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
24 the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, in consulta-

1 tion with the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Ad-
2 ministration, shall—

3 (1) adopt a nationwide policy that is in accord-
4 ance with this Act for governing general aviation
5 issues related to the management of Federal land
6 under the jurisdiction of those Secretaries; and

7 (2) require regional managers to adhere to that
8 policy.

9 (c) REQUIREMENTS FOR POLICIES.—A policy affect-
10 ing access to an aircraft landing strip located on Federal
11 land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior
12 or the Secretary of Agriculture, including the policy re-
13 quired by subsection (b), shall not take effect unless the
14 policy—

15 (1) is approved by the Administrator of the
16 Federal Aviation Administration;

17 (2) states that the Federal Aviation Adminis-
18 tration has the sole authority to control aviation and
19 airspace over the United States; and

20 (3) seeks and considers comments from State
21 governments and the public.

22 (d) MAINTENANCE OF AIRSTRIPS.—The Secretary of
23 the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall consult
24 with—

1 (1) the head of the aviation department of each
2 State in which an aircraft landing strip on Federal
3 land under the jurisdiction of that Secretary is lo-
4 cated; and

5 (2) other interested parties,
6 to ensure that such aircraft landing strips are maintained
7 in a manner that is consistent with the resource values
8 of the adjacent area.

9 (e) EXCHANGES OR ACQUISITIONS.—Closure or pur-
10 poseful neglect of any aircraft landing strip, or any other
11 action which would render any aircraft landing strip un-
12 serviceable, shall not be a condition of any Federal acquisi-
13 tion of or exchange involving private property upon which
14 the aircraft landing strip is located.

15 (f) PERMANENT CLOSURE.—For the purposes of this
16 Act, the term “permanent closure” means any closure the
17 duration of which is more than 180 days in any calendar
18 year.

19 (g) APPLICABILITY.—Subsections (a), (c), and (e)
20 shall apply to any action, policy, or exchange, respectively,
21 that is not final on the date of the enactment of this Act.

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